

**Re: SB 1206 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECORDING OF POLICE ACTIVITY BY THE PUBLIC**

March 23, 2011

Dear Senator Eric Coleman, Representative Gerald Fox, and members of the Judiciary Committee:

My name is James Cersonsky, and I urge you to pass **proposed Senate Bill No. 1206 AN ACT CONCERNING THE RECORDING OF POLICE ACTIVITY BY THE PUBLIC.**

I write to you as a student from the Undergraduate Organizing Committee at Yale. My fellow students recently learned that they could be physically abused for recording video of police misconduct.

As you are probably aware, 30 Yale students filed complaints against the New Haven Police Department for violating their rights on October 2, 2010. On that date, police and liquor agents entered a club in riot armor and began to shout insults and roughly handle students, although no students were involved in any altercation. When students took out their cell phones to record police actions, the police ordered students to put away their phones, tasered a student for failing to put his away, and threatened students who were recording video with their phones, shouting "Anybody else? Who's next?"

When the videos were made public, Mayor John DeStefano condemned the police raid. The mayor issued a public statement that citizens have a right to use their phones to record the police ("Mayor On Cop Videos: This is America," New Haven Independent, Oct. 4 2010). The Assistant Police Chief Ariel Melendez, who ordered the raid, ultimately resigned.

I agree with Mayor DeStefano that recording police activity is a fundamental American right. I ask you to pass **SB 1206** immediately, so that nobody has to endure what these students endured for exercising their First Amendment rights.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

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